

**Town of Garrett Park
Town Election Plan - 2021**

Due to the continuing health risks posed by COVID-19 that are associated with congregating indoors, it is recommended that the 2021 Town election be held as a vote by mail election.

SUMMARY TIMELINE:

Candidate Nominations via Online Public Meeting	April 9
Voter Registration	Now – April 9
Ballots Mailed to Registered Voters	By April 16
Report a Lost Ballot & Request a New Ballot	By April 23
Ballots Due (Received by election service provider)	May 3
Vote Count	May 4

Voter Registration

- 1) Qualified persons may register by universal registration with Montgomery County or the Town, or may register only with the Town, including residents who are not United States citizens.
- 2) To register to vote with the Town, residents must email the Town Manager at managerandrea@garrettparkmd.gov by April 9, 2021 , 11:59 PM.

Uncontested Election

- 1) Following the candidate nomination meeting, if the only confirmed candidates nominated for office are three candidates for Council, the election shall be deemed uncontested and cancelled. The candidates shall be considered elected as of May 3, 2021 and shall take office at the next Council meeting after the election.

Nominations

- 1) Nominations for elective office shall be made at an online public meeting on April 9, 2021.
- 2) Candidates must fill out a financial disclosure form and send to Town Manager Andrea Fox and Town Assistant Elizabeth Henley at managerandrea@garrettparkmd.gov and adminelizabeth@garrettparkmd.gov by April 12, 2021, 11:59 PM.
- 3) The Town Office will date, print, and keep records of nominations and financial disclosure forms.
- 4) Self-nominations do not need to be confirmed with 10 signatures on petition as in the past. Due to COVID-19 safety concerns, collecting signatures is highly discouraged.
- 5) Candidates are asked to be mindful of CDC recommendations regarding social distancing.

Vote by Mail

- 1) Polling stations will not be used; there will be no in-person voting. Balloting will be undertaken by mail only.
- 2) By April 16, 2021, the Town's election service provider will automatically mail a ballot, inner secrecy envelope and outer return envelope to each voter registered with Montgomery County or the Town.
- 3) The Town's election service provider shall affix first class postage to all balloting materials, including the ballot return envelopes.
- 4) Voters shall mail completed ballots to the Town's election service provider. Ballot envelopes must be received by the Town's election service provider by May 3, 2021 for the ballots to be counted.

- 5) Ballots shall be returned in the issued inner and outer return envelopes with the required information completed as requested.
- 6) Voters shall write their full legal name and address on the issued outer return envelope and sign the affirmation. Any identifying marks will only be on the outer return envelopes that are read and discarded before the ballots are counted.
- 7) Ballots enclosed in an incomplete, illegible, or unsigned return envelope shall not be counted. The Town will not accept copies of ballots or ballot envelopes.
- 8) If an issued ballot is lost or missing, a voter may request by e-mail to managerandrea@garrettparkmd.gov that the Town cancel the previously issued ballot and return envelope and issue a new ballot and return envelope. If a resident does not use email, they may call the Town Office at 301-933-7488. The request must be made no later than April 23, 2021, 11:59 PM. Upon receipt of such request, any previously issued ballot and return envelope for that voter will be voided.

Vote Count / Ballot Handling and Scanning Procedures - The election service provider will ensure a proper ballot is enclosed and will conduct the vote count on May 4, 2021.

- 1) Ballots will be picked up daily from the post office by election service provider personnel
- 2) The election service provider will video record all ballot and envelope handling activities and make the video available to the Town for viewing or download
- 3) Envelopes will be placed in numeric order
- 4) The election service provider will record the number of ballots received daily
- 5) The election service provider will verify:
 - That the ballot envelope has not been cancelled or spoiled
 - Ballot received by May 3, 2021
 - Ballot return envelope was properly completed and is unopened
 - Affidavit signatures verified to roster
 - Control number on ballot envelope matches control number assigned to the voter
- 6) Duplicate Ballots verified to roster and recorded
- 7) Open outer envelope and place all inner ballot envelopes aside – if no inner envelope is used place physical ballots aside (face down) to be counted
- 8) Open all inner envelopes and place ballots in stacks face down
- 9) Ballots that are marked improperly and will not scan are set aside for adjudication
- 10) All ballots marked properly will be scanned
- 11) Ballots that contain an overvote will be scanned and the overvoted office will not be counted
- 12) Election service provider will conduct video conference with Town Manager, Town Assistant, and Election Judges. The Election Judges will be the sole adjudicators of the ballots. The Town Manager and Town Assistant may provide assistance as requested by the Election Judges.
- 13) Election service provider to send final reports to Town and hand deliver all Election Materials including voted ballots, unused ballots, return and inner envelopes
- 14) Once the election results are known, the Town Manager, Town Assistant, and Chief Election Judge will notify candidates and residents of the results consistent with typical practices.

Other Safety Measures

- 1) The Town Manager and Chief Election Judge may implement such other measures as are consistent with this Emergency Plan and necessary to assure a safe election and protect the public health, safety, and welfare, or may hire a certified election service provider to carry out these functions.